

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BAR-BENCH-MEDIA CONFERENCE

A meeting of the Bar-Bench-Media Conference was held by video conference on Thursday, June 19, 1997, in the Superior Court in three locations in Delaware: the Grand Jury Room, Third floor of the Daniel L. Herrmann Courthouse in Wilmington; the Kent County Superior Court Judges' Chambers in Dover; and the Sussex County Superior Court Judges' Chambers in Georgetown. The meeting was open to the public.

The members of the Conference in attendance were:

Members from the Print News Media

Rita Farrell
 John Taylor

Members from the Electronic Media

Marilyn Buerkle
 Todd Haliday
 Allen Loudell
 William D. Osborne
 Michael Sigman

Members from the Bench

Vice Chancellor Jack B. Jacobs
 Judge Jay Paul James
 Justice Randy J. Holland
 Judge Roderick R. McKelvie
 President Judge Henry DuPont Ridgely
 Judge Leonard L. Williams

Members from the Bar

Eugene H. Bayard, Esquire
 Howard Handleman, Esquire

VI. New Business

Rita Farrell suggested that the conference take up the subject of interviews within the various courthouses. She mentioned that marshals and bailiffs insist that interviews of witnesses and attorneys occur outside of the court buildings. She asked whether the courts might allow interviews inside court buildings unless the interviews caused any disruption either by noise, lights, or blockage.

Todd Halliday suggested that the conference may wish to take up a new policy at the Federal District Court which prohibits electronic media from leaving cameras and other equipment at the security desk.

Finally, Rita Farrell suggested that the conference may wish to take up the fact that our various court systems use different computers for docketing, many of which, are incompatible and some of which are undecipherable.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on November 20, 1997. Once again, video conferencing will be available from the Grand Jury room in New Castle County, and the Judges' Chambers in the Kent County Courthouse and the Sussex County Courthouse.

The Chairman said that the conference will plan to meet in Dover in January, weather permitting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

○ He intends to plan and carry out a full day seminar on the subject of the Internet. The conference is due for the presentation of a full day seminar, and the Internet seems to be a topic of genuine interest among each of our branches.

○ Finally, he would like to follow up on our prior initiatives regarding cameras in the courtroom. Specifically, he said that he wanted the conference to be a facilitator for gathering and disseminating information about camera programs elsewhere, and to be of any assistance in getting any resources needed to decide the issue.

II. Cameras in the Courtroom

Mike Sigman is gathering materials from television stations and other media sources to see how various media outlets use courtroom camera footage. He suggested that the conference could be a facilitator for preparing a "trial" program (no pun intended). That is to say, we could develop a courtroom procedure for a given trial, but not for broadcast purposes. Rather, we would use the event simply to see how cameras in the courtroom might work. Judge Ridgely suggested we might incorporate this proposal within the existing draft "administrative directive" now before the Delaware Supreme Court. (A copy of that draft administrative directive is attached to these minutes.)

III. One Day Internet Seminar

Dick Kirk distributed the attached outline for a one day seminar on the Internet. The conference approved either Friday, April 24, 1997 or Friday, March 13, 1997 as possible dates, and expressed a preference for a downtown Wilmington location, unless technical requirements or opportunities suggest holding the seminar at some special location (such as the Del-Tech campuses which have satellite uplink capabilities). Media representatives Rita Farrell and Todd Halliday, bar representative Howard Handelman and a specially designated bench representative, Judge Henley Graves, will serve as the planning committee, with Dick Kirk as the chair.

IV. Topics for Upcoming Meetings

Mike Sigman suggested a number of topics for upcoming meetings: He suggested (a) the jury selection process; (b) evidence suppression; (c) reverse amenability hearings for juvenile offenders; and (d) public access to court filings in cases with sensitive issues or confidentiality orders. The Chair and Vice Chair will work on developing a program for the next meeting. The topic will be listed on the agenda.

V. Old Business

There was no old business remaining from any prior session.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of June 19, 1997, were approved, subject to corrections of name misspellings. A question was raised about the posting of upcoming meetings and it was suggested that the secretary notify members prior to the meetings so that the information could be posted.

A handout of the members of the conference was distributed and corrections were requested. Copies will be mailed to those members in Kent and Sussex counties.

Election of New Officers

The following officers were unanimously elected:
Chair, Michael Sigman, Vice-chair, Richard Kirk, Secretary, Judge Roderick McKelvie. Mr. Sigman thanked Judge McKelvie for his leadership and his staff's assistance during the past year.

Proposed list of meetings for 1997-98

The following dates for meetings for 1997-98 were approved:

Thursday, September 18, 1997

Thursday, November 20, 1997

Thursday, January 15, 1998

Thursday, March 19, 1998

Thursday, May 21, 1998

Committee Reports

Cameras in the Courtroom: Justice Holland reported that the matter was under advisement and that Supreme Court sessions had been televised in the past. It was suggested that members of the media prepare a presentation with television clips about the effectiveness of cameras in the courtroom. William Osborne distributed the attached handout of Vital Speeches by John Bull of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on the topic of the the legal community and the press.